DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 496 EC 162 856

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TITLE Education of the Young Offender: A Dynamic Approach.
PUB DATE 25 Apr 84
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (62nd, Washington, DC, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Daily Living Skills; *Delinquency; *Group Therapy; Institutionalized Persons; Job Skills; Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

The paper describes the program offered by the Shawbridge Youth Centers High School (Montreal, Quebec) for adolescent offenders and focuses on the school's Life Skills and Work Orientation Department (known by the students as the "Co-op"). Overall goals of the school's program include developing educational programs matched to individual needs and facilitating transition of students between institutional life and the community. The Co-op is based on two approaches--reality therapy and life space interviewing. The Co-op program is designed to help students acquire skills to improve their level of autonomy and employability. To illustrate the program, the process, from referral through evaluation, is reviewed. Sample forms are included. (SW)

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EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG OFFENDER:

A DYNAMIC APPROACH

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April 25,1984
CEC's 62nd Annual Convention
Washington, D.C.

EC162852

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A treatment center and a public school working together to provide educational services for young offenders - a challenge!

In attempting to provide a meaningful school program for youth requiring both educational and treatment services, the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and Shawbridge Youth Centers developed programs which had to meet two major conditions: (1) to ensure a standard of education equivalent to other high schools in the Province of Quebec; and, (2) to provide an educational structure sufficiently flexible to complement the treatment component.

This paper will explore briefly the program offered by Shawbridge Youth Centers High School and then, will focus on the Life Skills and Work Orientation Department, commonly known as the Co-op. The Co-op is, we believe, a unique answer to assisting young offenders in their re-integrating into the community.

In 1977, the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, a public school board serving 35,000 elementary and secondary students in the Montreal area, and Shawbridge Youth Centers, a residential and community treatment facility, negotiated an agreement. This resulted in public school teachers being responsible for the education of male and female young offenders placed in the care of Shawbridge Youth Centers by the Director of Youth Protection.

With the public school system came not only teachers, but also administrators, guidance personnel and a centralized curriculum. From the student perspective, many felt "at last a real school", since the teachers before this entente had been known as 'educational counsellors', and the 'co-ordinator of education' was replaced by a principal - a principal from the public school system who had not previously worked within the treatment center.

Further, with all the resources of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal at the disposal of this 'new' high school, the role of a high school operating within a residential treatment center had to be defined. Equally important was the definition of the responsibilities of the school board and the acceptance by the school board of this high school now under its jurisdiction - a high school full of delinquents! The public school system has always had a tendency to view such students as disruptive, law breakers, and as suffering from some lack of moral standards.

In defining the role of the school within the residential and community center proved more difficult than what it may appear on the surface. The administration of the school arrived to find a staff who had been hired by Shawbridge Youth Centers and transferred to the School Board. Many were not qualified. Some had left the public school system to avoid strikes and teachers' unions.

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Others were social workers in disguise. Some were do-gooders. Some had been previously fired from the public system -quite a group of individuals!

Basic tenants had to be agreed to by all before school goals could be developed. "Students do not learn if they are not in classrooms." "Teachers are paid to teach (impart knowledge)". "Education is a right - participating in the school program is a privilege." "Young offenders are out of control, therefore, structure must be provided."To this day some of the teachers still have difficulty accepting this role; however, in order to balance an educational program and a treatment program, such soulsearching had to be completed.

The literature suggests that there is a need to expand the number of options, if such a student population is to become actively involved. This was accomplished thanks to an extremely flexible and creative staff. Gradually those teachers who could not cope with these changes either resigned or requested a transfer. Staff development continued emphasizing individualized instruction as well as how to cope with such student characteristics as power struggles, the fact that such students do not ask questions, poor self-concepts and concrete conceptual abilities. It became very apparent that different teaching strategies had to be developed.

As previously mentioned, the goals of the high school were not in place. Gradually during the first year the goals were becoming obvious. The overall goals of the education program are:

1. to develop educational progress with high success probability.
2. to develop educational programs matched to individual needs.
3. to increase information processing ability.
4. to develop increased independence.
5. to facilitate transition of students, between institutional life and return to the community to school, work and community living.
6. to increase self-esteem.

In order to ensure these goals are attainable, the following staff are provided by the Protestant School Board and Shawbridge Youth Centers.

1. Security Treatment Units - 3 units
   4.5 Teachers for 36 students

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2. Observation-Receiving Unit - 1 unit
   2 Teachers for 12 students

3. Non-security Treatment Units - 5 units
   16 Teachers for 64 students
   3 Recreational staff provided by Shawbridge -50%

4. Detention Units - 3 units
   6.5 Teachers for 36 students

5. Community-based school program
   6 Teachers for 44 students
   2 Program specialists - 100%

Total Teaching personnel:35 for 188 students, i.e., a pupil-teacher ratio of approximately 5.4 to 1.

Support and Administrative Personnel (all provided by the Protestant School Board):
- Principal
- Vice-principal
- Guidance Counsellor -50%
- Career Advisor
- Staff Assistant (Community program and also teaches 100%)
- 3 Department Heads -20% release time each
  - French as a second language
  - Technical-vocational education
  - Academic subjects
- Staff Assistant (Detention Units and also teaches 100%)
- 3.5 Secretaries

It may appear extremely well staffed; however one must understand that the various programs are at the extreme some 65 miles apart. Hence, although referred to as Shawbridge Youth Centers High School, there are in fact four distinct campuses - each providing education to a different population, namely, detention, security, non-security (often called 'open'), and community-based.

Although the major function is obviously ensuring the most appropriate education for each student, it must be noted the since adolescents are placed in Shawbridge's care via the juvenile court system, the school must provide a most comprehensive program, ready to meet the needs of learning disabled, mildly retarded,average and gifted. Those requiring regular programs, vocational specialisation, enriched programs, et cetera. The courses that are presently offered can be found in Chart 1.

The Province of Quebec has a rather complicated High School Leaving Certification Program requiring so many credits at each high school level. All students must successfully complete courses in English,

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CHART 1

Shawbridge Youth Center High School

Curriculum 1983-84

Security Units

English
Math — all levels
French

Options

Biology
History of Canada and Québec(412)

Central School

English
Math — all levels
French
MRE
Physics 512
Biology 412
History 210
History 412
Geography 412
Compute Science 421-521
Home Economics 210

Independent Living
Economics 512
Auto Service
Motorises Equipment
Wood Work
Machine Shop
Introduction to Technology
Welding
Physical Education
Art

Project Center

English
Math — all levels
French
History 412
Biology 412
Physics 512

Woodwork-modified program
Food Service
Career Education
Recreation

Life Skills and Work Orientation Department: known as the Co-op

As appropriate

French, History, Geography, and Mathematics at the final year level. Further, province-wide examinations are presently and will continue to constitute 50% of the final mark.

In 1980, a Career Advisor was added to the school's staff. A study and search of the literature, specifically focussing on employment and young offenders. At that time in our Province a great deal of energy was being directed towards youth unemployment in general and the plight of the dropout in particular. Our province, as many of you are aware, is 80% French-speaking. The French word for dropout is "decrocheur" or the unhooked. The purpose of the adding the career advisor to the staff was to provide one more opportunity to hook these young people. Employment appears to be one of the best treatment approaches for reducing juvenile delinquency.

In 1979, Mills and Walter designed a study to prevent delinquents from getting into further delinquent acts by helping them to find and hold a job. 53 youths were in the experimental group and 23 were in the comparison group. Information was collected on all youths for one year. Those youths who were not arrested or institutionalised after joining the program and were in a job at least 3 months or stayed in school or returned to school, were considered successful. Follow-up results showed that 85% of the young people in the experimental group were successful compared to 14% in the comparison group.

It was this remarkable result spurred us on and the Life Skill and Work Orientation Department became a reality.

The Life Skills and Work Orientation Department, known by the students as the Co-op, is intended for both male and female students more than 16 years of age. Generally, they are functioning academically 3 or more years below level.

Many of the students have been institutionalised for many years or have been shunted from place to place since they had extreme difficulty coping with different environments. A typical example is Chris whose placement history is outlined in Annex 1. Many are turned off school. To many school is not only meaningless but also too abstract - they prefer more concrete, practical activities.

The Co-op is oriented with two approaches in mind,namely, reality therapy and life space interviewing. From William Glasser,we have 'borrowed' his concepts of goal setting (where do you want to go-what are you doing to get there-is that strategy the best possible), and the Classroom Discussion (we have adapted this to the world of work-why work is important-all jobs are worthwhile). Fritz Redl's Life Space Interviewing process permits the career advisor and teachers to stop the group process, focus on the behaviour or behaviours viewed as inappropriate, involve the other students in the problem solving, and keeping the discussion on the here and now.

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With this theoretical background, an inventory was then developed incorporating such activities as banking skills, paying bills, budgetting, being responsible for an apartment, -the down to earth skills required for day to day living. Many of thses activities are foreign to institutional adolescents. In fact, reflect for a moment on how you learned or acquired these skills or habits. Chances are you can't pinpoint when for these are what I shall call tangentially learned skills. Skills learned within the family structure. Remember that msny of these young people either come from terribly disorganised families or institutions. In Quebec,although group homes are common, many of the facilities developed to serve young offenders are based on a childcare model and not a group home parent model.

The overall goal of the Co-op is as follows:

> FOR THOSE ADOLESCENTS READY TO WORK OR WHO DESIRE TO LEARN HOW TO WORK:A) AN INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM AND HELP TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WORK WILL BE GIVEN; B) WILL BE ABLE TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT JOB ORIENTATIONS AND JOB SKILLS;C)WILL PARTICIPATE IN WORK STUDIES; D) WILL RECEIVE COUNSELLING AND ADDITIONAL HELP TO SECURE PART OR FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT; E) WILL WORK IN THE FURNITURE STRIPPING PLANT; AND, F) WILL LEARN ACCEPTABLE WORKING SKILLS, IN GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALLY.

This goal will be met through general objectives which are the foundation for the development of the individual's contract which is agreed to at the beginning of the student's entry into the Co-op. The objectives are divided into four major areas, that is, attitude toward work and self, establishing systematic work habits, social skills and hands-on skills training toward work experience and employment. The sub-objectives are found in Chart 2.

The program was designed to help the students acquire skills that will improve their level of autonomy and employability. Keeping in mind that these students are not always well-motivated, juvenile delinquent, institutionalised for up to 10 years, moved about from here to there by a social service,somewhat learning disabled in the broadest sense, and are often hampered by impulsivity.

In order to provide practical activities such that the objectives can be attained a series of 'areas of concentration' were developed. These areas are in no order which is the reason we have depicted them as a wheel. The student's individualised program is developed and the amount of emphasis in each area is decided upon at that time and is reviewed frequently. These areas include: development of the contract, work in the furniture stripping plant, job hunting preparation, independent living preparation, office work, distribution, in-house work study, out-side work study, job hunting, part time work, and hopefully, full time employment. See Chart 3.

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Chart 2

Life Skills and Work Orientation Department
Expansion of General Objectives

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The following general objectives are helpful in establishing flexible guidelines for the Co-op.

A. Attitudes

1. Learn to enjoy and dignify all kinds of work.
2. Learn willingness and perseverance.
3. Be able to diagnose his own limitations.
4. Be able to discuss employer-employee problems.

B. Establish Systematic Work Habits

1. Regular on-job attendance
2. Be able to complete a variety of forms and applications.
3. Be able to use communication media, i.e., newspaper telephone, letters, - to communicate in relation to job needs.

C. Social Skills

1. Understand the refinements of good grooming
2. Be able to converse easily and communicate clearly
3. Carry on a personal interview successfully
4. Be able to accept failure and success and to take suggestions.
5. Learn how to prepare for independent living.

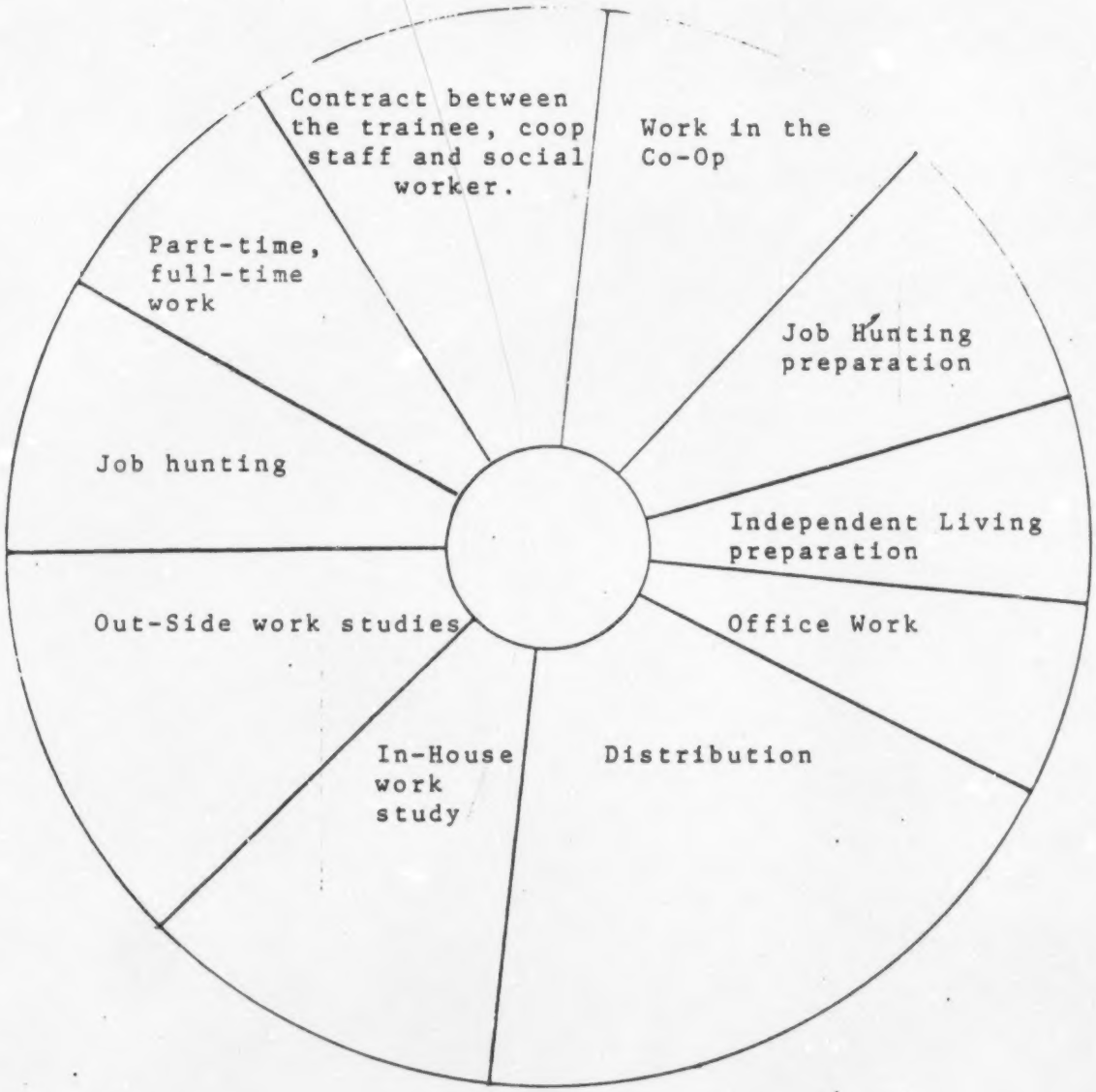
D. Hands-on Skills Training toward Work Experience and Employment

1. Successful placement at different work stations in the work simulation shop.
2. Develop job hunting skills
3. Successful placement on 3 different work studies experiences.
4. Successful placement in part time work
5. Successful placement in full time work

Chart 3

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Life Skills and Work Orientation Department



Perhaps the easiest way to fully appreciate the inner workings of the program is to follow a candidate as he or she is processed.

The Referral

The social worker (the assumption is made that the youngster and the worker have met and discussed the program) fills in the referral form that gives the career advisor all the pertinent information. An interview date is then arranged for the potential student, social worker and career advisor to explain the program. See Form 1.

The Interview

Upon arrival the candidate completes the Co-op application form. This activity permits a quick appraisal as to the level of functioning of the student and begins the pre-employment simulation. The interview takes place right after the form has been completed and a general discussion takes place centering around such topics as the student's background, how he heard about the program, if he has any personal objectives formulated at this point, his parents' support, and so on. The group then moves on to visit the furniture stripping plant and he can talk with the teacher (originally referred to as the foreman; however, that was dropped after discussion with the students) and the other participants in the program.

The potential candidate will not receive an immediate acceptance, since, once again, the attempt to simulate the world of work is uppermost in our minds. He or she will receive an answer (almost always affirmative) within forty-eight hours.

The Contract

The accepted student is now known as the trainee. Once again the trainee, social worker and career advisor meet and discuss the woking conditions - hours of work, in class activities (English, French and Mathematics in the world of work are offerred to those who wish to upgrade themselves),break times, lunch (a commercial food service progrm is incorporated within the school program, hence lunch is served on the premises and for the majority of the trainees and student is compulsory),procedures concerning lates, absences, and the like. At this time the most important discussion occurs - the money sharing, that is, the moneys earned from the various jobs, distribution activities, et cetera. The contract is then finalised and signed by all concerned. See Form 2.

Evaluation Procedures

During the interview the evaluation procedures are explained. As can be appreciated the explanation is repeated often for obvious reasons. There is a weekly report, given to each trainee every Friday. It concentrates on work habits, performance and acceptance of direction(s). After being reviewed by the trainee, he or she is

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FORM 1

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION DEPARTMENT

SERVICE DE FORMATION SOCIALE ET PROFESSSIONNELLE CO-OP

REFERRAL FORM

Candidate name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Age: _____ D.O.B. _____ S.I.N.: _____

Highest grade completed: _____ Year: _____

School attended: _____

Other training, skills, hobbies, interests: _____

_____

_____

Previous work experience: _____

_____

_____

Rationale for referral: _____

_____

_____

_____

Medical/physical disabilities or restrictions: _____

_____

Date: _____ Worker: _____ Tel: _____

Agency: _____

.....

(for office use only)

Date of interview: _____
Accepted: Yes___ NO___
Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____

CD/

FORM 1a

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION DEPARTMENT

SERVICE DE FORMATION SOCIALE ET PROFESSIONNELLE CO-OP

.....APPLICATION FORM.....

Name:_____ male___ female:___

Address:_____

Telephone:_____

Date of Birth:_____Social Insurance Number:_____

Caseworker:_____

Grade completed:_____School:_____

Health:_____

Work experience:_____

_____

_____

_____

Reasons why you would like to be employed in the Co-Op:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date:_____

Signature:_____

.....

(do not write below this line)

Date interviewed:_____
Employ: Yes___ No:___
Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Start work:_____

Termination:_____

Reasons:_____

_____

_____

CD/

FORM 2

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION

CONTRACT

I, _____ *WANT TO BE IN THE CO-OP*

BECAUSE _____

_____

_____

_____

I understand that I have to give 100% of my capacity to the program. My hours are between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm, weekdays. I will be asked to work occasionally on evenings and weekends. Because of security measures I know that smoking is prohibited in the Co-op. There will be a 20 minute break at 10:20 and lunch will be served at 12:00. I will be back to work no later than 1:00 pm. I will punch my time card as explained by the school foremen.

The Co-op program will help me develop good working habits. I will learn how to go job hunting and will learn how to manage an independant living situation. I will do some office work with the career advisor and wood projects in the basement with the Co-op staff.

The Co-op is not offering a salary but I will receive a share as soon as I start in the Co-op.

This contract is valid for two months.

I, _____ *WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CO-OP DEPARTMENT. I AGREE TO ALL THE CONDITIONS OUTLINED BY MY CASE-WORKER, THE CAREER ADVISOR, AND THE CO-OP FOREMAN.* _____

Date

_____ _____

Employee's Signature *Worker's Signature*

_____ _____

Foreman's Signature *Career Advisor's Signature*

requested to sign it acknowledging the evaluation. (See Form 3). Should the trainee disagree with the evaluation, he or she is invited to complete a form entitled 'reasons for refusing to sign the evaluation form'. (See Form 4). This will lead to a meeting among the teacher, career advisor, trainee, and any other person that the trainee would like present.

Finally, at the end of each month a formal report is submitted to the young person's social worker. (See Form 5). This report can lead to an updating and/or modification to the original contract.

A Day in the Co-op

Each morning the trainee punches his time card and verifies his work assignment for the period. In the furniture stripping plant, the trainee is involved with removing paint, varnish, sanding, refinishing and repairing as needed. At certain time during the year (Christmas, Easter), plant stands, rocking horses, wooden trucks and other small wood projects are completed for sale. One period is devoted each day is dedicated to career education - an opportunity to review attitudes, values and individual interests. Aptitude tests, job hunting related activities and independent living projects are assigned and completed.

Work Study Program

When the trainee has acquired a certain level of acceptable work habits in the Co-op, he or she is then offered an in-house or out side work study. The in-house work study provides a more sheltered environment. Due to the extreme behaviours which many of the young offenders exhibit, the in-house workstudy ensures that the relationship developed between the Co-op and private industry is not placed in jeopardy. Often the adolescent fells comfortable enough to go directly into the outside work study. Naturally, the attempt to match student interest and appropriate work study is a priority.

Job Hunting

After successfully completing two or three work study experiences, the trainee is ready to participate in a job hunting program. It is paramount that the trainee has the following entry behaviour: can fill application forms; can present a written resume; and, can handle himself appropriately in a job interview. The trainee is then registered with the local Manpower Employment Center and, in consultation with the career advisor and his or her social worker re-arrange the time commitments in the contract, such that, he is released to go on a supervised job hunt. The young people are required to keep a log which is reviewed with the career advisor.

Employment

As this is the ultimate objective, high priority is given to this

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FORM 3

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION DEPARTMENT

...TRAINEE'S WEEKLY EVALUATION...

NAME: _____ WEEK ENDED: _____

	ALWAYS	OCCASIONALLY	HARDLY EVER	SCORE
A. WORK HABITS				
stays with job assigned				
works with little supervision				
being able to ask questions				
knowing how to understand criticism				
B. PERFORMANCE SKILLS				
able to follow instructions				
produces quality work				
aware of safety				
C. ACCEPTANCE SKILLS				
clean appearance				
is punctual				
shows proper behavior				

TOTAL: ___/50___

COMMENTS:

SIGNATURES: _____ _____

Co-Op Foreman Trainee

/CD

FORM 4

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION DEPT.

.....REASONS FOR REFUSING TO SIGN THE WEEKLY EVALUATION.....

Name of employee:_____

Date of evaluation:_____

Reasons:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DATE:_____

Signed:_____
Co-Op Employee

FORM 5

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND WORK ORIENTATION DEPARTMENT

...TRAINEE EVALUATION SHEET...
...MONTHLY REPORT...

Name of Trainee:_____

Average Score for the Month:_____

The following is a brief report of the above trainee's performance during the month of _____19___.

	YES	NO	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Treats staff with respect			
meets with average production			
interested in learning			
works well in group			

COMMENTS:

Signed:_____
Co-Op Foreman

Signed:_____
Career Advisor

phrase and permit the maximum flexibility in programming and timetable modifications. If a parttime job is secured - the individual can maintain his or her position in the program. If a full time positionis secured, the career advisor visits the trainee on the job and is available for counselling or any other support that the young person may need.

Conclusion

This program is to our knowledge one of, if not the only, program of its kind in Canada. The Life Skills and Work Orientation Department provides a comprehensive career education program designed to meet the needs of young offenders. Its uniqueness centers on the concept of profit sharing as a motivating factor for improving social behaviour. This has created a greater awareness of quality, productivity and concern for budget.

Finally, the Life Skills and Work Orientation Department (the Co-op) is attempting to meet the individual needs of the socially maladjusted adolescents and provide them with new attainable goals. Many previous institutional approaches that these young people had participated in failed, whereas this program has demonstrated that success is within reach for a very difficult population.

ANNEX 1

June 18,1981.

Placement History:

December 12,1979 A.W.O.L. from home. Picked up by Police. Returned home with social worker intervention.
April 28,1980 Emergency Shelter (Rudel). Conflict at home. Father refusing to have him home.
April 1980 Detention Center (Cite) following a fight in Emergency Shelter (rudel)
August 5,1980 A.WO.L. after auto theft charge.
August 12,1980 Reflection Unit (Weredale)
August 22,1980 A.W.O.L. from Reflection Returned on his own August 23.
August 25,1980 A.W.O.L. from Reflection Returned on his own August 26.
August 26,1980 Emergency placement (Belanger)
November 5, 1980 Reflection Unit (Weredale) for 5 days.
January 9,1981 A.W.O.L. from home.
January 12,1981 Emergency Shelter (AMBCAL)
January 27,1981 Sent to another Emergency Shelter (Lachine)
February 16,1981 Removed from Emergency Shelter (Lachine) by police following rioting in Shelter, vandalism. Placed in a Detention Unit (Cartier)
February 18,1981 moved to another Detention Unit (Cite)
February 24,1981 returned home
April 16,1981 A.W.O.L. from home
April 21,1981 Placed in a holding center (L'Escale).
April 22,1981 moved to a Detention Unit (Cartier)
April 24, 1981 moved to another Detention Unit (Cite)
June 16,1981 returned home.

This history is not atypical of children served by the youth service system within the Province of Quebec. The Province of Quebec has in the past ten years, developed a continuum of placement facilities. Missing from the list are two other facilities,(1) a residential program for pre-deliquent youth (Youth Horisons), and (2) a residential program for young offenders based on differential treatment model (Shawbridge Youth Centres). It should be noted that both residential programs have an aftercare component - group homes and foster home placements.

References

Mills, C.M., and T.L. Walter, "Reducing juvenile delinquency:A behavioural employment intervention program", Stumphauzer,J.S.,(ed.),Progress in Behaviour Therapy with Delinquents, C.C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois,1979.